

MULTI-LAYER BRAIDED STRUCTURES FOR OCCLUDING VASCULAR DEFECTS

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

I. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to intravascular devices for treating certain medical conditions and, more particularly, relates to a low profile intravascular occlusion devices for treating congenital defects including Atrial and Ventricular Septal Defects (ASD and VSD respectively), Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) and Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO). The devices made in accordance with the invention are particularly well suited for delivery through a catheter or the like to a remote location in a patient's heart or in analogous vessels or organs within a patient's body.

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II. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

A wide variety of intra cardiac prosthetic devices are used in various medical procedures. For example, certain intravascular devices, such as catheters and guide wires, are generally used simply to deliver fluids or other medical devices to specific locations within a patient's heart, such as a selective coronary artery within the vascular system. Other, frequently more complex, devices are used in treating specific conditions, such as devices used in removing vascular occlusions or for treating septal defects and the like.

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In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to occlude a patient's vessel, such as to stop blood flow through an artery to a tumor or other lesion. Presently, this is commonly accomplished simply by inserting, for example, Ivalon particles (a trade name for vascular occlusion particles) and short sections of coil springs into a vessel at a desired location. These "embolization agents" will eventually become lodged in the vessel, frequently floating downstream of the site at which they are released before blocking the vessel. This procedure is often limited in its utility, in part, due to the inability to precisely position the embolization agents. These embolization agents are not commonly used as an intra cardiac occluding device.

Physicians may temporarily occlude a septal defect until the patient stabilizes enough for open-heart surgical procedures and have used balloon catheters similar to that disclosed by Landymore et al. in U.S. Patent 4,836,204. When using such a catheter, an expandable balloon is carried on a distal end of a catheter. When the catheter is guided to the desired location, the balloon is inflated with a fluid until it substantially fills the vessel and becomes lodged therein. Resins, which will harden inside the balloon, such as an acrylonitrile, can be employed to permanently fix the size and shape of the balloon. The balloon can then be detached from the end of the catheter and left in place. If the balloon is not filled enough, it will not be firmly lodged in the septal defect and may rotate and loosen from the septal wall, thereby being released into the blood flowing from the right or left ventricular chamber. Overfilling the balloon is an equally undesirable occurrence, which may lead to the rupture of the balloon and release of resins into the patient's bloodstream.

Mechanical embolization devices, filters and traps have been proposed in the past, representative examples of which are disclosed in King et al., U.S. patent 3,874,388 (the '388 patent), Das, U.S. patent 5,334,217 (the '217 patent), Sideris, U.S. patent 4,917,089 (the '089 patent) and Marks, U.S. patent 5,108,420 (the '420 patent). The '388, '217, '089, and '420 devices are typically pre-loaded into an introducer or delivery catheter and are not commonly loaded by the physician during the medical procedure. During deployment of these devices, recapture into the delivery catheter is difficult if not impossible, thereby limiting the effectiveness of these devices.

Significantly, the size of these devices is inherently limited by the structure and form of the device. When using occluding devices such as the '089, '388, '217, or '420 plug to occlude a septal defect, the pressure and therefore the chance of dislodgment of the device increases with the size of the defect. Consequently, these devices must have a very large retention skirt positioned on each side of the defect. Oftentimes, the position of the septal defect dictates the size of the retention skirt. In a membranous type septal defect, it is difficult if not improbable to be able to effectively position the '388, '217, '089, or '420 device without at least partially closing off the aorta. Also, these disclosed devices tend to be rather expensive and time-consuming to

manufacture. Hence, it is desirable to provide a low profile device that is recoverable and retractable into the delivery system without increasing the overall thickness of the device. The desired device should also be made with a relatively small retention skirt so as to be positionable within a membranous type septal defect without closing off the aorta.

Also, the shape of the prior art devices (for example, squares, triangles, pentagons, hexagons and octagons) requires a larger contact area, having corners, which extend to the free wall of the atria. Each time the atria contracts (approximately 100,000 times per day), internal wires within the prior art devices, such as described in the Das '217 patent, are flexed, creating structural fatigue fractures in approximately 30 percent of all cases. The sharp corners of these devices resulted in a high percentage of cardiac perforations and they were, therefore, withdrawn from the market. Furthermore, the previous devices require a 14-16 French introducing catheter, making it impossible to treat children affected with congenital defects with these devices.

Accordingly, it would be advantageous to provide a reliable occlusion device which is both easy to deploy through a 6-7 French catheter and which can be accurately placed in a vessel or organ. It would also be desirable to provide a low-profile recoverable device for deployment in an organ of a patient's body.

In the Kotula et al. U.S. Patent 5,846,261, there is described a reliable, low-profile, intra cardiac occlusion device which may be formed to treat, for example, Ventricular Septal Defects (VSD), Atrial Septal Defects (hereinafter ASD), and Patent Ductus Arteriosus (hereinafter PDA). When forming these intravascular devices from a resilient metal fabric a plurality of resilient strands are provided, with the wires being formed by braiding to create a resilient material. This braided fabric is then deformed to generally conform to a molding surface of a molding element and the braided fabric is heat treated in contact with the surface of the molding element at an elevated temperature. The time and temperature of the heat treatment is selected to substantially set the braided fabric in its deformed state. After the heat treatment, the fabric is removed from contact with the molding element and will substantially retain its shape in the deformed state. The braided fabric so treated defines an expanded

state of a medical device, which can be deployed through a catheter into a channel in a patient's body.

Embodiments of the Kotula et al. invention provide specific shapes for medical devices, which may be made in accordance with that invention to address identified medical needs and procedures. The devices have an expanded low-profile configuration and may include recessed clamps that gather and hold the ends of the braided metal fabric and that attach to an end of a delivery device or guide wire, allowing recovery of the device after placement. In use, a guide catheter is positioned and advanced in a patient's body such that the distal end of the catheter is adjacent a desired treatment site for treating a physiological condition. A preselected medical device, made in accordance with the Kotula et al. invention and having a predetermined shape, is then collapsed by longitudinally stretching and inserted into the lumen of the catheter. The device is urged through the catheter and out the distal end whereupon, due to its memory property, it will tend to substantially return to its expanded state adjacent the treatment site. The guide wire or delivery catheter is then released from the clamp and removed.

In accordance with a first of these embodiments, a generally elongate medical device has a generally tubular middle portion and a pair of expanded diameter portions, with one expanded diameter portion positioned at either end of the middle portion. The width of the middle portion approximates the wall thickness of the organ to be occluded, for example, the thickness dimension of the septum and its diameter to the size of the defect to be occluded. The center of at least one of the expanded diameter portions may be concentric with or offset relative to the center of the middle portion, thereby allowing occlusion of a variety of septal defects including membranous type ventricular septal defect, while providing a retention skirt of sufficient size to securely close the abnormal opening in the septum. As mentioned above, each braided end of the device is held together with a clamp. The clamps may be recessed into the expanded diameter portion of the device, thereby reducing the overall length dimension of the device and creating a low profile occluder.

In another embodiment of the Kotula et al. invention described in the '261 patent, the medical device is generally bell-shaped, having an elongate body, a tapered

first end, and a larger second end. The second end has a fabric disc which will be oriented generally perpendicular to an axis of a channel when deployed therein. The clamps, which hold together the braided strand ends, are recessed toward the center of the "bell" providing a low-profile device having a reduced overall height dimension.

5 The ability of the devices described in the Kotula et al. '261 patent to occlude abnormal openings in a vascular organ depend upon the pick size of the braided structure which, in turn, depends upon the number of wire strands used in the braid. However, a practical limit exists on just how many such strands can be braided. For example, if 72 bobbins are used on the braiding machine, the resulting pick size is such
10 that a prolonged period of time must elapse before total thrombosis takes place and blood flow through the device is totally occluded. Even with 144 bobbins, blood flow is not immediately stemmed. If the pick size were effectively halved by doubling the number of bobbins on the braiding machine to 288, occlusion would occur somewhat instantaneous upon placement of the medical device in the abnormal opening.
15 However, the resulting machine size of the braider becomes impractical from a size and cost standpoint.

 As a way of reducing the time required to achieve total occlusion, the Kotula et al. '261 patent teaches the concept of filling the interior of the medical device with an occluding fiber or an occluding fabric, such as a polyester fabric. This occluding fiber
20 material or fabric is generally hand sewn in place, which adds significantly to the manufacturing cost of the medical devices. Perhaps more importantly, adding polyester fiber or fabric in the interior of the device interferes with the ability to reduce the effective diameter of the device upon stretching prior to loading the device into the lumen of a delivery catheter. It should be recognized that by reducing the size of the
25 delivery catheter, it can be used with smaller patients.

 Thus, a need exists for a way to form a collapsible medical device for occluding abnormal openings in a vascular organ which provides rapid occlusion following delivery and placement thereof and which does not require the addition of an occluding fabric placed within the interior of the medical device as taught by the prior art. The
30 present invention provides a readily manufacturable solution to the aforementioned problems inherent in the prior art as represented by the Kotula et al. '261 patent.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A collapsible medical device made in accordance with the present invention comprises multiple layers including an outer metal fabric surrounding at least one, and possibly two or more, inner metal fabric(s) wherein each of the outer and inner metal fabrics each comprise a plurality of braided metal strands exhibiting an expanded preset configuration. The collapsible medical device has proximal and distal ends each incorporating clamps for securing the plurality of braided strands that comprise the inner and outer metal fabrics together. It is to be understood that each of the several inner layers may have their ends clamped individually and separately from the ends of the strands comprising the outer layer. The medical device is shaped to create an occlusion of an abnormal opening in a vascular organ when in its expanded preset configuration. The expanded preset configuration is deformable to a lesser cross-sectional dimension for delivery through a channel in a patient's body. Both the outer and inner metal fabrics have a memory property such that the medical device tends to return to the expanded preset configuration when unconstrained. By braiding the inner metal fabric(s) so as to have a greater number of braided metal strands than are provided in the outer metal fabric and of a smaller wire diameter, the resulting device is still readily deformable to a lesser cross-sectional dimension for delivery through a channel in a patient's body, yet the increase in the total number of metal strands comprising the outer and inner metal fabrics result in a device that provides immediate occlusion and does not require a sewn-in occluding fabric. For example, the outer braided metal fabric may have, say, 72 strands; each of a first diameter while the inner metal fabric may be braided from 144 strands, each of a smaller diameter than the diameter of the strands in the outer fabric layer. The outer metal fabric can also be braided from 144 or more strands.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing features and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment, especially when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which like numerals in the several views refer to corresponding parts.

FIG. 1 is an enlarged, side elevation view of an ASD occluder incorporating

the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged front elevation view of the device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged side elevation view of the device of FIG. 1 when longitudinally stretched;

5 FIG. 4 is a right end view of the device shown in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged, side elevation view of a PDA occluder incorporating the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a right end view of the device of FIG. 5; and

FIG. 7 is a greatly enlarged view like that of FIG. 6.

10 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides a percutaneous catheter directed occlusion device for use in occluding an abnormal opening in a patients' body, such as an Atrial Septal Defect (ASD), a ventricular septal defect (VSD), a Patent Ductus arteriosus (PDA), a Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO), and the like. It may also be used in fabricating
15 a flow restrictor or an aneurysm bridge or other types of occluders for placement in the vascular system. In forming a medical device, via the method of the invention, a planar or tubular metal fabric is provided. The planar and tubular fabrics are formed of a plurality of wire strands having a predetermined relative orientation between the strands. The tubular fabric has metal strands which define two sets of essentially
20 parallel generally helical strands, with the strands of one set having a "hand", i.e. a direction of rotation, opposite that of the other set. This tubular fabric is known in the fabric industry as a tubular braid.

The pitch of the wire strands (i.e. the angle defined between the turns of the wire and the axis of the braid) and the pick of the fabric (i.e. the number of turns per
25 unit length) as well as some other factors, such as the number of wires employed in a tubular braid and their diameter, are important in determining a number of properties of the device. For example, the greater the pick and pitch of the fabric, and hence the greater the density of the wire strands in the fabric, the stiffer the device will be. Having a greater wire density will also provide the device with a greater wire surface
30 area, which will generally enhance the tendency of the device to occlude a blood vessel in which it is deployed. This thrombogenicity can be either enhanced by, e.g. a coating

of a thrombolytic agent, or abated, e.g. by a coating of a lubricious, anti-thrombogenic compound. When using a tubular braid to form a device of the Kotula '261 patent, a tubular braid of about 4 mm in diameter with a pitch of about 50° and a pick of about 74 (per linear inch) would seem suitable for fabricating devices capable of occluding abnormal openings of about 2 mm to about 4 mm in inner diameter. However, the occlusion may not be immediate.

A metal planar fabric is a more conventional fabric and may take the form of a flat woven sheet, knitted sheet or the like. In the woven fabric there are typically two sets of generally metal strands, with one set of strands being oriented at an angle, e.g. generally perpendicular (having a pick of about 90°), with respect to the other set. As noted above, the pitch and pick of the fabric (or, in the case of a knit fabric, the pick and the pattern of the knit, e.g. Jersey or double knits) may be selected to optimize the desired properties of the resulting medical device.

The wire strands of the planar or tubular metal fabric are preferably manufactured from so-called shape memory alloys. Such alloys tend to have a temperature induced phase change which will cause the material to have a preferred configuration which can be fixed by heating the material above a certain transition temperature to induce a change in the phase of the material. When the alloy is cooled back down, the alloy will "remember" the shape it was in during the heat treatment and will tend to assume that configuration unless constrained from so doing.

Without any limitation intended, suitable wire strand materials may be selected from a group consisting of a cobalt-based low thermal expansion alloy referred to in the field as ELGELOY, nickel-based high temperature high-strength "superalloys" commercially available from Haynes International under the trade name HASTELLOY, nickel-based heat treatable alloys sold under the name INCOLOY by International Nickel, and a number of different grades of stainless steel. The important factor in choosing a suitable material for the wire strands is that the wires retain a suitable amount of the deformation induced by a molding surface (as described below) when subjected to a predetermined heat treatment.

In the preferred embodiment, the wire strands are made from a shape memory alloy, NiTi (known as Nitinol) that is an approximately stoichiometric alloy of nickel

and titanium and may also include other minor amounts of other metals to achieve desired properties. Handling requirements and variations of NiTi alloy composition are known in the art, and therefore such alloys need not be discussed in detail here. U.S. Patents 5,067,489 (Lind) and 4,991,602 (Amplatz et al.), the teachings of which
5 are incorporated herein by reference, discuss the use of shape memory NiTi alloys in guide wires. Such NiTi alloys are preferred, at least in part, because they are commercially available and more is known about handling such alloys than other known shape memory alloys. NiTi alloys are also very elastic and are said to be "super elastic" or "pseudoelastic". This elasticity allows a device of the invention to return to
10 a preset expanded configuration for deployment.

When forming a medical device in accordance with the present invention, rather than having a single braided fabric layer, a plurality of appropriately sized pieces of tubular or planar metal fabric are appropriately layered with respect to one another and inserted into the same mold, whereby the fabric layers deform to generally
15 conform to the shape of the cavities within the mold. The shape of the cavities is such that the plural metal fabric layers deform into substantially the shape of the desired medical device. The ends of the wire strands of the tubular or planar metal fabric layers should be secured to prevent the metal fabrics from unraveling. A clamp or welding, as further described below, may be used to secure the ends of the wire
20 strands. The advantages of the present invention can also be achieved by heat-treating the inner and outer fabric layers separately and then inserting the inner layer or layers within the confines of the outer layer. It is further contemplated that the inner and outer fabric layers may be heat-set into different geometries and then assembled one within the other.

25 In the case of a tubular braid, a molding element may be positioned within the lumen of the braid prior to insertion into the mold to thereby further define the molding surface. If the ends of the tubular metal fabric have already been fixed by a clamp or welding, the molding element may be inserted into the lumen by manually moving the wire strands of the fabric layers apart and inserting the molding element into the lumen
30 of the innermost tubular fabric. By using such a molding element, the dimensions and shape of the finished medical device can be fairly accurately controlled and ensures that

the fabric conforms to the mold cavity.

The molding element may be formed of a material selected to allow the molding element to be destroyed or removed from the interior of the metal fabric. For example, the molding element may be formed of a brittle, frangible or friable material. Once the material has been heat-treated in contact with the mold cavities and molding element, the molding element can be broken into smaller pieces, which can be readily removed from within the metal fabric. If this material is glass, for example, the molding element and the metal fabric can be struck against a hard surface, causing the glass to shatter. The glass shards can then be removed from the enclosure of the metal fabric.

Alternatively, the molding element can be formed of a material that can be chemically dissolved, or otherwise broken down, by a chemical agent that will not substantially adversely affect the properties of the metal wire strands. For example, the molding element can be formed of a temperature resistant plastic resin that is capable of being dissolved with a suitable organic solvent. In this instance, the fabric and the molding element can be subjected to a heat treatment to substantially set the shape of the fabric in conformance with the mold cavity and molding element, whereupon the molding element and the metal fabric can be immersed in the solvent. Once the molding element is substantially dissolved, the metal fabric can be removed from the solvent.

Care should be taken to ensure that the materials selected to form the molding element are capable of withstanding the heat treatment without losing their shape, at least until the shape of the multiple fabric layers has been set. For example, the molding element could be formed of a material having a melting point above the temperature necessary to set the shape of the wire strands, but below the melting point of the strands forming the metal fabric layers. The molding element and the layers of metal fabric ultimately comprising the medical device can then be heat treated to set the shape of the metal fabric, whereupon the temperature can be increased to substantially completely melt the molding element, thereby removing the molding element from within the metal fabric. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the shapes of the mold cavities and the molding elements may be varied in order to

produce the medical device having a preselected size and shape.

It should be understood that the specific shape of a particular molding element produces a specific shape and other molding elements having different shape configurations may be used as desired. If a more complex shape is desired, the molding element and mold may have additional parts including a camming arrangement, but if a simpler shape is being formed, the mold may have few parts. The number of parts in a given mold and the shapes of those parts will be dictated almost entirely by the shape of the desired medical device to which the metal fabric will generally conform.

When the multiple layers of tubular braid, for example, are in their relaxed configuration, the wire strands forming the tubular braids will have a first predetermined relative orientation with respect to one another. As the tubular braids are compressed along their axis, the fabric layers will tend to flare out away from the axis conforming to the shape of the mold. When so deformed, the relative orientation of the wire strands of the metal fabric layers will change. When the mold is assembled, the outer and inner metal fabrics will generally conform to the molding surface of the cavity. The medical device has a preset expanded configuration and a collapsed configuration which allows the device to be passed through a catheter or other similar delivery device. The shape of the fabric layers generally defines the expanded configuration when they are deformed to generally to conform to the molding surface of the mold.

Once the tubular or planar metal fabric layers are properly positioned within a preselected mold with the metal fabric layers generally conforming to the molding surface of the cavities therein, the fabric layers can be subjected to a heat treatment while they remain in contact with the molding surface. Heat-treating the metal fabric comprising the plural layers substantially sets the shapes of the wire strands from which they are braided in a reoriented relative position when the fabric layers conform to the molding surface. When the medical device is removed from the mold, the fabric layers retain the shape of the molding surfaces of the mold cavities to thereby define a medical device having a desired shape. This heat treatment will depend in large part upon the material of which the wire strands of the metal fabric layers are formed, but

the time and temperature of the heat treatment should be selected to substantially set the fabric layers in their deformed state, i.e., wherein the wire strands are in their reoriented relative configuration and the fabric layers generally conform to the molding surface.

5 After the heat treatment, the device is removed from contact with the mold surfaces and will substantially retain its shape in a deformed state. If a molding element is used, this molding element can be removed as described above.

 The time and temperature of the heat treatment can very greatly depending upon the material used in forming the wire strands. As noted above, one preferred
10 class of materials for forming the wire strands are shape memory alloys, with Nitinol, a nickel titanium alloy, being particularly preferred. If Nitinol is used in making the wire strands of the fabric layers, the wire strands will tend to be very elastic when the metal is in its austenitic phase; this very elastic phase is frequently referred to as a super
15 elastic or pseudo elastic phase. By heating the Nitinol above a certain phase transition temperature, the crystal structure of the Nitinol metal will tend to “set “ the shape of the fabric layers and the relative configuration of the wire strands in the positions in which they are held during the heat treatment.

 Suitable heat treatments of Nitinol wire to set a desired shape are well known in the art. Spirally wound Nitinol coils, for example, are used in a number of medical
20 devices, such as in forming the coils commonly carried around distal links of guide wires and in forming other medical products known in the art. A wide body of knowledge exists for forming Nitinol in such devices, so there is no need to go into great detail here on the parameters of a heat treatment for the Nitinol fabric preferred for use in the present invention.

25 Briefly, though, it has been found that holding a Nitinol fabric at about 500 degrees centigrade to about 550 degrees centigrade for a period of about 1 to 30 minutes, depending upon the size of the mold and the stiffness of the device to be made will tend to set the fabric layers in their deformed state, i.e., wherein they conform to the molding surface of the mold cavities. At lower temperatures, the heat
30 treatment time will tend to be greater and at higher temperatures the time will tend to be shorter. These parameters can be varied as necessary to accommodate variations in

the exact composition of the Nitinol, prior heat treatment of the Nitinol, the desired properties of the Nitinol in the finished article, and other factors which will be well known to those skilled in this field.

5 Instead of relying on convection heating or the like, it is also known in the art to apply an electrical current to the Nitinol to heat it. In the present invention, this can be accomplished by, for example, connecting electrodes to opposed ends of the metal fabric layers. Resistance heating in order to achieve the desired heat treatment, which will tend to eliminate the need to heat the entire mold to the desired heat-treating temperature, can then heat the wire. The materials, molding elements and methods of
10 molding a medical device from a tubular or planar metal fabric is further described in U.S. Patents 5,725,552, 5,944,738 and 5,846,261 and assigned to the same assignee as the present invention, the entire disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

15 Once a device having a preselected shape has been formed, the device may be used to treat a physiological condition of a patient. A medical device suitable for treating the condition, which may be substantially in accordance with one of the embodiments outlined below, is selected. Once the appropriate medical device is selected, a catheter or other suitable delivery device may be positioned within a channel in a patient's body to place the distal end of the delivery device adjacent the
20 desired treatment site, such as immediately adjacent (or even within) the shunt of an abnormal opening in the patient's organ for example.

The delivery device (not shown) can take any suitable shape, but desirably comprises an elongate flexible metal shaft having a threaded distal end for engagement with a threaded bore formed in the clamp of the medical device. The delivery device
25 can be used to urge the medical device through the lumen of a catheter for deployment in a channel of a patient's body. When the medical device is deployed out the distal end of the catheter, the delivery device still will retain it. Once the medical device is properly positioned within the shunt of the abnormal opening, the shaft of the delivery device can be rotated about its axis to unscrew the medical device from the delivery
30 means.

By keeping the medical device attached to the delivery means, the operator can

retract the device for repositioning relative to the abnormal opening, if it is determined that the device is not properly positioned within the shunt. A threaded clamp attached to the medical device allows the operator to control the manner in which the medical device is deployed out the distal end of the catheter. When the medical device exits
5 the catheter, it will tend to resiliently return to a preferred expanded shape, which is set when the fabric is heat-treated. When the device springs back into this shape, it may tend to act against the distal end of the catheter effectively urging itself forward beyond the end of the catheter. This spring action could conceivably result in improper positioning of the device if the location of the device within a channel is
10 critical, such as where it is being positioned in a shunt between two vessels. Since the threaded clamp can enable the operator to maintain a hold on the device during deployment, the spring action of the device can be controlled by the operator to ensure proper positioning during deployment.

The medical device can be collapsed into its reduced diameter configuration
15 and inserted into the lumen of the catheter. The collapsed configuration of the device may be of any shape suitable for easy passage through the lumen of a catheter and proper deployment out the distal end of the catheter. For example, an ASD occluding device may have a relatively elongated collapsed configuration wherein the devices are stretched along their axes. This collapsed configuration can be achieved simply by
20 stretching the device generally along its axis, e.g. by manually grasping the clamps and pulling them apart, which will tend to collapse the expanded diameter portions of the device inwardly toward the device's axis. A PDA occlusion device also operates in much the same fashion and can be collapsed into its collapsed configuration for insertion into the catheter by applying tension generally along the axis of the device. In
25 this regard, these devices are not unlike "Chinese handcuffs", which tend to constrict in diameter under axial tension.

If the device is to be used to permanently occlude a channel in the patient's body, one can simply retract the catheter and remove it from the patient's body. This will leave the medical device deployed in the patient's vascular system so that it may
30 occlude the blood vessel or other channel in the patient's body. In some circumstances, the medical device may be attached to a delivery system in such a

manner as to secure the device to the end of the delivery means. Before removing the catheter in such a system, it may be necessary to detach the medical device from the delivery means before removing the catheter and the delivery means.

Although the device will tend to resiliently return to its initial expanded configuration, i.e., its shape prior to being collapsed for passage through the catheter, it should be understood that it might not always return entirely to that shape. For example, it may be desirable that the device has a maximum outer diameter in its expanded configuration at least as large as and preferably larger than, the inner diameter of the lumen of the abnormal opening in which it is to be deployed. If such a device is deployed in a vessel or abnormal opening having a small lumen, engagement with the lumen will prevent the device from completely returning to its expanded configuration. Nonetheless, the device would be properly deployed because it would engage the inner wall of the lumen to seat the device therein.

When the device is deployed in a patient, thrombi will tend to collect on the surface of the wires. By having a greater wire density as afforded by the multiple layer construction of the present invention, the total surface area of the wires will be increased, increasing the thrombotic activity of the device and permitting it to relatively rapidly occlude the vessel in which it is deployed. It is believed that forming the occlusion device with the outermost layer being 4 mm diameter tubular braid whose strands are about 0.004 inch in diameter and having a pick of at least about 40 and a pitch of at least about 30° and surrounding an inner tubular braid whose strands are about 0.001 inch and of the same pick and pitch will provide sufficient surface area to substantially completely occlude an abnormal opening or blood vessel of 2 mm to about 4 mm in inner diameter in a very short period of time. If it is desired to increase the rate at which the device occludes, a third or fourth concentrically disposed braided layer can be added.

Referring now to the drawings, a discussion of the embodiments of the medical device of the present invention will next be presented. Figures 1-4 illustrate a first preferred embodiment of a medical device 10 constructed in accordance with the present invention for correcting an atrial septal defect (ASD). With reference to Figures 1-4, the device 10 is shown greatly enlarged so that the multiple layers

comprising the medical device can be viewed. The ASD device is in its relaxed, non-stretched state with two aligned disks 12 and 14 linked together by a short middle cylindrical section 16 (Fig.3). It is proposed that this device 10 may also be well suited in occluding defects known in the art as patent foramen ovale (hereinafter PFO).

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that a device of this configuration may also be suitable for use in a transcatheter closure during a Fenestrated Fontan's procedure.

ASD is a congenital abnormality of the atrial septum characterized by structural deficiency of the atrial septum. A shunt may be present in the atrial septum, allowing flow between the right and left atrial chambers of the heart. In large defects with significant left to right shunts through the defect, the right atrium and right ventricle are volume overloaded and the augmented volume is ejected into a low-resistance pulmonary vascular bed.

Pulmonary vascular occlusive disease and pulmonary atrial hypertension develops in adulthood. Patients with secundum ASD with a significant shunt (defined as a pulmonary blood flow to systemic blood flow ratio of greater than 1.5) are operated upon ideally at two to five years of age or whenever a diagnosis is made in later years. With the advent of two dimensional echocardiography and Doppler color flow mapping, the exact anatomy of the defect can be visualized. The size of the defect as determined by balloon measurement will correspond to the selected size of the ASD device 10 to be used.

The device 10, shown in its unconfined or relaxed state in Figures 1 and 2, is adapted to be deployed within the shunt comprising an ASD or a PFO. For exemplary purposes, use of the device 10 in an ASD closure procedure is described in the Kotula '261 patent referenced above and those wishing further information are referred to that patent. Turning first to the constructional features of the device 10, the ASD occluder is sized in proportion to the shunt to be occluded. In the relaxed orientation, the metal fabric is shaped such that two disk like members 12 and 14 are axially aligned and linked together by the short cylindrical segment 16. The length of the cylindrical segment 16 when not stretched preferably approximates the thickness of the atrial septum, and ranges between 3 to 5 mm. The proximal disk 12 and distal disk 14 preferably have an outer diameter sufficiently larger than the shunt to prevent

dislodging of the device. The proximal disk 14 has a relatively flat configuration, whereas the distal disk 12 is preferably cupped towards the proximal end slightly overlapping the proximal disk 14. In this manner, the spring action of the device 10 will cause the perimeter edge 18 of the distal disk to fully engage the sidewall of the septum and likewise an outer edge of the proximal disk 14 will fully engage an opposite sidewall of the septum.

In accordance with the present invention, the device 10 comprises an outer braided layer 20, a first inner layer 22 and possibly an optional third and innermost layer 24, thereby significantly increasing the wire density without unduly increasing the stiffness of the device or its ability to assume a decreased outer diameter upon longitudinal stretching. Multiple inner layers may be used as needed.

The ends of the tubular braided metal fabric device 10 are welded or clamped together with clamps as at 26, to avoid fraying. The ends of all of the layers may be grouped together and secured by two clamps, one at each end or separate clamps can be applied on each end of the individual layers. Of course the ends may alternately be held together by other means readily known to those skilled in the art. The clamp 26 tying together the wire strands of the multiple layers at one end also serves to connect the device to a delivery system. In the embodiment shown in Figure 1, the clamp 26 is generally cylindrical in shape and has a recess (not shown) for receiving the ends of the metal fabric to substantially prevent the wires comprising the woven fabric from moving relative to one another. The clamp 26 also has a threaded bore 28. The threaded bore is adapted to receive and engage a threaded distal end of a delivery device, such as a pusher wire.

The ASD occlusion device 10 of this embodiment of the invention can advantageously be made in accordance with the method outlined above. The outer layer 20 of device 10 is preferably made from a .004-.008 inch diameter Nitinol wire strands, but lesser or greater diameter strands can be used as well. The braiding of the wire mesh comprising the outer layer may be carried out with 28 picks per inch at a shield angle of about 64 degrees using a Maypole braider with 72 wire carriers. The braided layers 22 and 24 may each comprise 144 strands of Nitinol wire of a diameter in a range of from 0.001 inch to 0.002 inch, braided at the same pitch. The stiffness of

the ASD device 100 may be increased or decreased by altering the wire size, the shield angle, the pick rate, and the number of wire carriers or the heat treatment process.

Those skilled in the art will recognize from the preceding discussion that the cavities of a mold must be shaped consistent with the desired shape of the ASD device. Also, it will be recognized that certain desired configurations may require that portions of the

Figure 3 illustrates the ASD device 10 in a somewhat longitudinally stretched state. The distance separating the distal and proximal disks 12 and 14 is preferably equal or slightly less than the length of the cylindrical segment 16.

The cup shape of each disk 12 and 14, ensures complete contact between the outer edge of each disk 12 and 14 and the atrial septum. Upon proper placement, a new endocardial layer of endothelial cells forms over the occlusion device 10, thereby reducing the chance of bacterial endocarditic and thromboembolisms.

The distance separating the disks 12 and 14 of occluding device 10 may be increased to thereby provide an occluding device suitable for use in occluding a channel within a patient's body, having particular advantages in use as a vascular occlusion device. The device 10 includes a generally tubular middle portion 16 and a pair of expanded diameter portions 12 and 14. The expanded diameter portions are disposed at either end of the generally tubular middle portion. The relative sizes of the tubular middle section 16 and the expanded diameter portions 12-14 can be varied as desired. The medical device can be used as a vascular occlusion device to substantially stop the flow of blood through a patient's blood vessel. When the device 10 is deployed within a patient's blood vessel, it is positioned within the vessel such that its longitudinal axis generally coincides with the axis of the vessel segment in which it is being inserted. The dumbbell shape is intended to limit the ability of the vascular occlusion device to turn at an angle with respect to the axis of the blood vessel to ensure that it remains in substantially the same position in which the operator deploys it within the vessel.

In order to relatively strongly engage the lumen of the blood vessel, the maximum diameter of the expanded diameter portions 12-14 should be selected so that it is at least as great as the diameter of the lumen of the vessel in which it is to be deployed and is optimally slightly greater than that diameter. When it is deployed

within the patient's vessel, the vascular occlusion device will engage the lumen at two spaced apart locations. The device is desirably longer along its axis than the dimensions of its greatest diameter. This will substantially prevent the vascular occlusion device 10 from turning within the lumen at an angle to its axis, essentially preventing the device from becoming dislodged and tumbling along the vessel within the blood flowing through the vessel.

The relative sizes of the generally tubular middle portion 16 and expanded diameter portions 12-14 of the vascular occlusion device can be varied as desired for any particular application by appropriate selection of a mold to be used during the heat setting of the device. For example, the outer diameter of the middle portion 16 may range between about 1/4 and about 1/3 of the maximum diameter of the expanded diameter portions and the length of the middle portion 16 may comprise about 20% to about 50% of the overall length of the device 10. Although these dimensions are suitable if the device is to be used solely for occluding a vascular vessel, it is to be understood that these dimensions may be varied if the device is to be used in other applications, such as a ventricular septal defect occluder (VSD).

The aspect ratio (i.e., the ratio of the length of the device over its maximum diameter or width) of the device 10 illustrated in this embodiment is desirably at least about 1.0, with a range of about 1.0 to about 3.0 being preferred and then aspect ratio of about 2.0 being particularly preferred. Having a greater aspect ratio will tend to prevent the device 10 from rotating generally perpendicularly to its axis, which may be referred to as an end-over-end roll. So long as the outer diameter of the expanded diameter portions 12-14 of the device 10 is large enough to seat the device fairly securely against the lumen of the channel in which the device is deployed, the inability of the device to turn end-over-end will help keep the device deployed precisely where it is positioned within the patient's vascular system or in any other channel in the patient's body. Alternatively, having expanded diameter portions 12-14 which have natural relaxed diameters substantially larger than a lumen of the vessels in which the device is deployed should also suffice to wedge the device into place in the vessel without undue concern being placed on the aspect ratio of the device.

Referring next to Figures 5-9, there is shown generally a device 100 suitable

for occluding a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA). PDA is essentially a condition wherein two blood vessels, the aorta and the pulmonary artery adjacent the heart, have a shunt between their respective lumens. Blood can flow directly between these two blood vessels through the shunt, resulting in cardiac failure and pulmonary vascular disease.

5 The PDA device 100 has a generally bell-shaped body 102 and an outwardly flaring forward end 104. The bell-shaped body 102 is adapted to be positioned within the aorta to help seat the body of the device in the shunt. The sizes of the body 102 and the end portion 104 can be varied as desired during manufacture to accommodate different sized shunts. For example, the body 102 may have a diameter along its
10 generally slender middle of about 10 mm and a length along its axis of about 25 mm. In such a medical device 100, the base of the body may flare generally radially outward until it reaches an outer diameter equal to that of the forward end 104 which may be on the order of about 20 mm in diameter.

The base 106 desirably flares out relatively rapidly to define a shoulder 108,
15 tapering radially outwardly from the body 102. When the device 100 is deployed in a vessel, this shoulder 108 will abut the perimeter of the lumen being treated with higher pressure. The forward end 104 is retained within the vessel and urges the base of the body 102 open to ensure that the shoulder 108 engages the wall of the vessel to prevent the device from becoming dislodged from within the shunt.

20 A PDA occlusion device 100 of this embodiment of the invention can advantageously be made in accordance with the method outlined above, namely deforming multiple layers 110, 112 and 114 (Fig. 7) of generally concentrically oriented tubular metal fabric to conform to a molding surface of a mold and heat-treating the fabric layers to substantially set the fabric layers in their deformed state. With
25 continued reference to the greatly enlarged view of Figure 7, the outer layer 110 comprises a frame that defines the outer shape of the medical device 100. It is preferably formed from 72 or 144 braided strands whose diameters are in a range of from 0.003 to about 0.008 inch. The pitch of the braid may be variable. Within this frame is the layer 112 that forms an outer liner. It may also prove expedient to
30 incorporate a third layer 114 as an inner liner. The outer and inner liners may be braided using 144 strands of a shape memory wire whose diameter may be 0.001 to

0.002 inch. The pitch of the braid in layers 112 and 114 should be the same. As noted above, the ends 116 and 118 of the braided layers should be secured in order to prevent the braids from unraveling. In the preferred embodiment, clamps 120 are used to tie together the respective ends of the wire strands on each end 116 and 118 of the tubular braid members forming the occlusion device 100. Alternatively, different clamps may be used to secure the ends of the metal strands of the outer fabric layer than are used to secure the ends of the metal strands of each of the inner layers. It is to be understood that other suitable fastening means may be attached to the ends in other ways, such as by welding, soldering, brazing, use of biocompatible cementitious material or in any other suitable fashion. One or both clamps 120 of the outer layer may include a threaded bore 122 that serves to connect the device 100 to a delivery system (not shown). In the embodiment shown, the clamps 120 are generally cylindrical in shape and have a crimping recess for receiving the ends of the wire strands to substantially prevent the wires from moving relative to one another.

When using untreated NiTi fabrics, the strands will tend to return to their unbraided configuration and the braided layers 110, 112 and 114 can unravel fairly quickly unless the ends of the length of the braided layers that are cut to form the device are constrained relative to one another. The clamps 120 are useful to prevent the layers of braid from unraveling at either end. Although soldering and brazing of NiTi alloys has proven to be fairly difficult, the ends can be welded together, such as by spot welding with a laser welder. When cutting the fabric comprising the multiple layers 110, 112 and 114 to the desired dimensions, care should be taken to ensure that the fabric layers do not unravel. In the case of tubular braids formed of NiTi alloys, for example, the individual strands will tend to return to their heat set configuration unless constrained. If the braid is heat treated to set the strands in the braided configuration, they will tend to remain in the braided form and only the ends will become frayed. However, it may be more economical to simply form the braid without heat-treating the braid since the fabric will be heat treated again in forming the medical device.

Once the fabric is compressed so as to conform to the walls defining the mold interior, the fabric layers can be subjected to a heat treatment such as is outlined above. When the mold is open again the fabric will generally retain its deformed, compressed

configuration. The formed device 100 can be collapsed, such as by urging the clamps 120 generally axially away from one another, which will tend to collapse the device 100 toward its axis. The collapsed device can then be attached to a delivery device, such as an elongated flexible push wire and passed through a delivery catheter for deployment in a preselected site in the patient's body. The use of the resulting device to occlude a PDA is the same as has been described in the Kotula '261 patent and need not be repeated here.

Because of the significant increase in the number of wire strands in the composite multi-layer structure, it is no longer necessary to incorporate a sewn-in polyester material in order to reduce the time required to establish total occlusion of a PDA. This not only reduces the cost of manufacture but also facilitates loading of the resulting device into a delivery catheter of a reduced French size. Reduced French size means ability to treat smaller patents which is a major advantage.

This invention has been described herein in considerable detail in order to comply with the Patent Statutes and to provide those skilled in the art with the information needed to apply the novel principles and to construct and use embodiments of the example as required. However, it is to be understood that specifically different devices can carry out the invention and that various modifications can be accomplished without departing from the scope of the invention itself.

What is claimed is: